

**Wheeling, IL** - U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk joined Metra's Chairman Jeff Ladd and RTA Chairman Jim Reilly to dedicate the start of expanded service on the North Central Rail Line. Since first elected, Kirk helped secure \$135 million in federal funds to complete the line's second track, allowing Metra to double the number of trains serving many of the 10th District's communities.

"Federal funding for the North Central Line's second track enabled Metra to double the number of commuter trains from 10 to 20, reducing traffic gridlock in our communities," said Kirk. "The expanded service will allow people to leave earlier or stay later, giving them greater flexibility. The North Central Line will also connect more people to O'Hare and help our communities meet their obligations under the Clean Air Act."

The expanded service also includes new trains for reverse commuters coming from the city in the morning and returning in the evening. By giving reverse commuters the option of using Metra, the expanded service will help reduce the gridlock on the Kennedy Expressway and Northwest Tollway.

Congressman Kirk applauded the work of Jeff Berman, a Buffalo Grove Village Trustee, for his work on the future of the North Central Line's schedule. Metra will negotiate with the owners of the line, the Canadian National Railroad, to provide express trains during rush hours. Kirk asked Metra to formally review the line's schedule on April 30 to see if Metra can provide express trains.

Over 200,000 residents of the 10th District could benefit from the North-Central's expanded service with more flexible commutes and higher home values.

"The North-Central service is the first new American commuter rail line in over 50 years," said Kirk. "Funding for this service is one of my proudest achievements in Congress and will make a real difference in improving the quality of life for northern Illinois families."

Expanded service on the North-Central Rail Line begins January 30.

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